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Crimpville Comments

Happy
New Year!

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Historical
Commission

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Ernest Taft

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A Beginning and an Ending-----ASSUMPTION CHURCH

In 1927, the first services of Assumption Church in South Bellingham were celebrated with a mass in a large tent that had been erected on a vacant lot next to the original rectory. This tent served as the church until September, when a converted garage, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Trottier was converted to a two-story building. An ell was added at the rear later. This was Assumption Church until May

1960. A number of different pastors were assigned here over the years. To mention only a few--Father Albert Bergeron was very influential in the early years of the church. Another was Father Aubut. Our list could go on....



1st Mass

In 1956, a parochial school became a reality. It was staffed by Presentation-of-Mary nuns, who were lodged in one of the oldest houses in Bellingham, adjacent to the church. Their dedication to

the children for 19 years, will long be remembered.



Pastors, from Rev. Donat Binette up to Father Brian McMahon served the faithful over the years.

The parish had a successful religious instruction program, an active CCD(see following page) and parish organizations that contributed to a

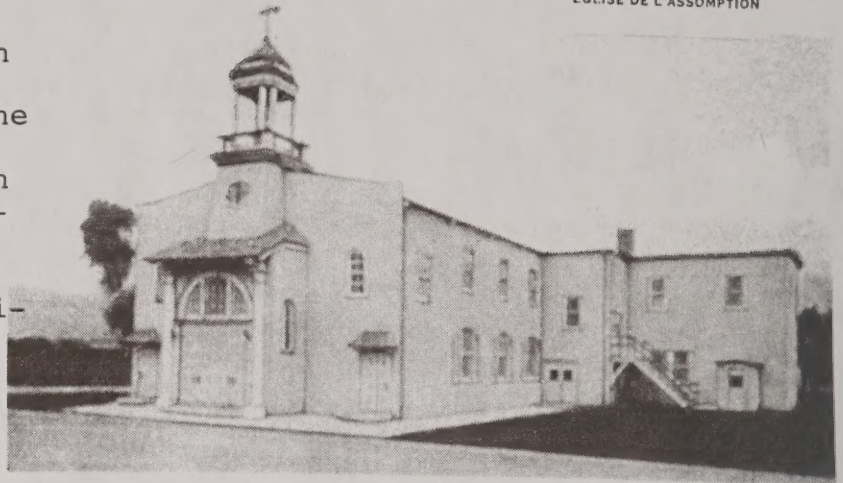
strong and united Assumption Family.

EGLISE DE L'ASSOMPTION

The closing of Assumption marks the end of many long-time traditions so vital to the lives of the parishioners.

During the holiday season one tradition still continues-

In 1970, a CCD class taught by Sue and Dan Ranieri entertained 15 Wrentham State Residents with a gift and a meal provided by Emma & the late Arthur Vermette. This was the first of the 35 years of sharing and caring for others less fortunate.



It has grown over the years, in scope and enthusiasm. It's hard to tell who has benefited the most....This year the party was held at the Bellingham Middle School and will continue even though the parish has been closed.

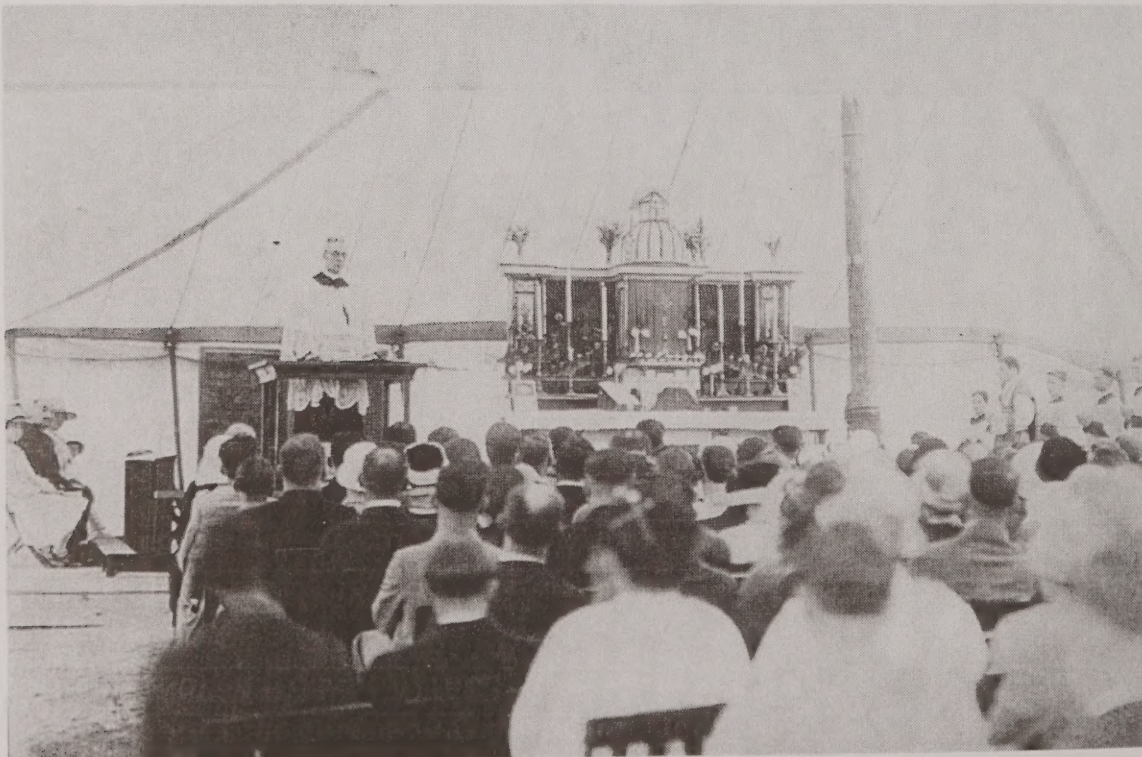
Changes have taken place over the years. Those attending from the State school has grown to over 50 and the number of volunteers to over 100. The Ranieri family has taken on much of the activities. Volunteers such as Richie Hayward has provided music, Henri Masson has attended each year, Fred Dehmer took pictures with Santa and the late Nev Meehan played the clown. So many others donated their time to make it a success.

Though many parishioners now attend St. Blaise Church--Assumption Church and its parish will be sorely missed.

contributors: Donat LaPlante

Daniel Ranieri

compiled by: ETA



Civil War Veterans Honored

A Bellingham Man, Frank Haley of 4 Arpahoe Road, has begun a task long needed for the cemeteries of Bellingham and the surrounding towns. Frank, a member of Sons Of Union veterans is on the National Graves Registration Committee, MA GAR Highway Officer, Secretary/Treasurer A. A. Sherman Camp #18, Uxbridge, MA and is undertaking the job of marking all the graves of the veterans of the Civil War.

Marked years ago by the Grand Army of the Republic, the markers have either been stolen, vandalized or simply lost to time. Some of the old markers can be found for sale on E Bay and in antique stores for high markup. The new markers are not as attractive for grave robbers and hopefully will remain for many years.

Since there is no central directory for veterans in each cemetery, the job requires that the graves of veterans first be identified. This often requires



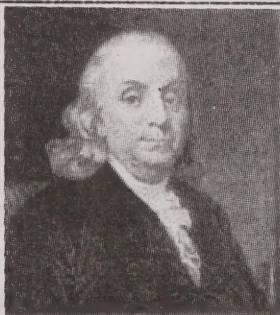
extensive on site hunting. Because of the age of gravestones, it also requires patience and good eyes to identify the right stones.

To date, Frank has identified and marked 36

veterans graves in the various cemeteries of Bellingham.

The painstaking work has also resulted in more than just finding the graves. Frank's work has also provided a detail of the service of these men from local and national records.

Each marker costs nearly \$20.00. To help defray the cost, the Bellingham Historical Commission voted to provide a small grant to Frank to aid in this search.



Ben Franklin (AP Photo)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BEN

January 17, 1706

QUESTIONS(?) & ANSWERS(!)

Question: What were "Trip Hammers?" There is one referred to in the Bellingham history book.

ANSWER: Trip hammers were water - powered hammers.

These hammers did the same work as a hand-held hammer, but were operated mechanically.

One of these was located in Medway around 1810, and the one you refer to was in operation at the Caryville Mill around 1815.

In both installations, a sluice was dug to provide a water flow to turn an oval shaped wheel on which rode a roller gear to raise and lower the hammer.

There were various designs of these machines, but all of them embodied the eccentric-motion principle.

The sluiceway at the Caryville Mill can still be seen, just north of, and parallel to the river at Maple Street. It furnished water power for a grist mill and the trip hammer.

One advantage offered by a trip hammer was the size and weight of hammer that could be used. Hammers weighing as much as 25 or 30 pounds were common, far exceeding the weight of hand-held hammers.

All the blacksmith, or hammer operator had to do was position the work on the anvil.

Trip hammers were commonly used to shape white-hot metal parts, or weld parts together. The repetitive, evenly-spaced blows of the heavy hammer also provided a uniformity not humanly possible.

Most factories of the time made parts for, and repaired their machinery, and trip hammers were of great value in these processes.

Unfortunately, not all trip hammers were recorded, according to the Iron and Steel Institute. The hammers at West Medway and Bellingham, for example, do not appear in the I&SI listings.

This is all the more surprising, in that the water-powered trip hammer was one of the greatest labor-saving devices of its day.

FDD

HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY. TEST YOUR SKILLS WITH THE FOLLOWING MASSACHUSETTS TRIVIA QUESTIONS.

1/ What is the official Massachusetts state dog?

2/ What is the nickname for the U.S.S. Constitution moored in the Charlestown Navy Yard?

3/ Where was America's first subway system?

4/ What was the first American city founded by a woman?

5/ What was the first town in the world to have electric street lights?

6/ Name one of Boston's nicknames?

7/ Name two patriots born in Massachusetts?

8/ What is the oldest marathon in the U.S.?

9/ Where is the 400-foot Bridge of Flowers?

10/ What is the asparagus capital of the world?

11/ What sport did William Morgan invent in Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1895?

12/ Who was Peregrine White?

13/ What is the tallest granite monument in the U.S.?

14/ What Boston College football player won the prestigious Heisman Trophy in 1984?

15/ What lake in Massachusetts has the longest name?

16/ What is the date on Plymouth Rock?

17/ From what location did Boston Mayor James Michael Curley run an election campaign?

18/ What is the official Massachusetts state insect?

19/ What is the official Massachusetts state tree?

20/ Name four U.S. presidents who were born in Norfolk County, Massachusetts?

answers to Trivia, p.14

The Massachusetts Legacy

Massachusetts

Official name: Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Origin of name: From Algonquian, for "large hill place."

Admitted to statehood: February 6, 1788 (sixth).

Capital: Boston (founded 1630).

Motto: Ense Petit Placidam Sub Libertate Quietem
(By the Sword We Seek Peace, but Peace Only under Liberty).

Area: 10,555 square miles (44th of 50 states).

Longitude/latitude: 72°W/42° 30'N.

Geographic center: Worcester, north part of city.

Length: 190 miles.

Width: 50 miles.

Highest point: Mt. Greylock (3,487 feet).

Mean elevation: 500 feet.

Population: 6,016,425 (1990 census; 13th largest).

Highest/lowest recorded

temperature: 107°F, August 2, 1975, at Chester and New Bedford;
-35°F, January 12, 1981, at Chester.

Colonial Massachusetts also holds the distinction of issuing the first government-backed paper money in the Western world. In 1690, war-weary soldiers returned from a failed attempt to take Québec from the French and demanded payment from an empty Boston treasury. They were eventually paid with paper "bills of credit" issued per order of the General Court and backed by taxes and fees to be collected later.



SOME NOTABLE BELLINGHAM RESIDENTS - II

Joseph Holbrook, Jr.

Joseph Holbrook Jr. was born in Mendon, November 24, 1714, son of Joseph and Mary (Cook) Holbrook, who were married in Mendon December 29, 1710.

He married Grace ---, and settled near the Wrentham line south of the village of North Bellingham.

Seven children are recorded to them in Bellingham between 1739 and 1755.

He was a signer of the Precinct petition for the Medway precinct, and worked five days on the meeting house. He was a Deacon in the 2d Church in Medway.

The Partridge Bellingham History relates a story of a Joseph Holbrook who "was a Baptist," and who "rode horseback to New Jersey" to find a professor for Brown University when it was started.

The Joseph Holbrook noted was not a member of the Baptist Church. He died before Brown University was founded. It was very likely the Holbrook involved in the Brown University matter was Joseph Jr., born in 1714.

Deacon Joseph Holbrook Jr. died in Bellingham July 14, 1785, and his widow died May 13, 1791, aged 76.

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Obidiah Adams, Jr.

Obadiah Adams Jr. was the son of Obadiah and Christian (Sanford) Adams and was born in Medway in 1721. Obadiah ("Old Obie") Adams was one of the earliest settlers of Medway, and his wife Christian was the daughter of Deacon Thomas Sanford of Mendon.

They were married April 24, 1716, in Mendon.

Obadiah Jr., ("Young Obie") settled in Bellingham near the Wrentham border around 1743, and on December 8, 1744, married Sarah Partridge, born in Wrentham July 25, 1725, daughter of John and Anna Partridge. They were near neighbors to Joseph Holbrook.

Obadiah and Sarah had six children recorded in Bellingham, one of them having the unusual name of "Abigirl." Whether this spelling was accidental, or for emphasis is not known. There seems to have been a continuing problem with the family name, for another child is recorded as "Samuel Admams," and Young Obie's name is spelled Obediah.

Obadiah signed the petition for the new precinct in Medway, and worked one day on the meeting house.

He died January 2, 1803, aged 83, and his wife Sarah died April 27, 1817 at the age of 93, an unusual longevity for those times.

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Enoch Hill

Little is known of Enoch Hill. Some genealogies give his birth in Medway as October 13, 1719, and an Enoch Hill was admitted to the Second Church in Medway July 29, 1753.

He married Mary Darling according to intentions filed in Bellingham December 26, 1747. An Enoch Hill "of Bellingham" married Mehitable Metcalf there April 3, 1760.

He lived near Obadiah Adams and Joseph Holbrook, near the Wrentham line.

No children were recorded to him in Bellingham, and an unofficial record says Enoch's wife Mary died in 1760.

Enoch was a signer of the precinct petition in Medway, worked one day on the meeting house, and furnished "one stick of timber" for framing the meeting house.

No record has been found of Enoch Hill's death or burial place.

FDD

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WATER TROUGH moves to TOWN COMMON

On October 16th, a group of citizens gathered at the Town Common to see the formal acceptance of OUR OLD WATER TROUGH, once again in the Center of Bellingham, in it's new location.

In 1904, the town voted to purchase and install a drinking fountain or water trough. Henry Jenkes was paid \$131.00 for the fountain; and \$143.02 was paid for the installation. Twenty dollars of the cost came from 'the Wentworth Fund' given to towns to establish drinking fountains on the condition that "Blessed Are the Merciful" be inscribed on them.



"The town is changing so much", said Historical Commission Chairman Ernest Taft. "They're destroying the history and architecture of our town. We want history preserved, and we don't want our past to go by us."

In 1902, \$50. was paid to Thomas Buckley for land to be used for a town well, in the approximate location of St. Blaise Church.

In 1903, \$2000 was appropriated to dig a well and a trench down the road to the location of the fountain and then to the Center School to supply water. The fountain/trough was located in front of the Civil War Monument and the Baptist Church, at the intersection of routes 140 and 126.



About 10 years ago, it was removed to be refurbished. It was sand-blasted and new parts were cast. Still not complete, it was stored at the D.P.W., where more work was done on it. Another company has now been contracted to complete the work of restoration.

In 1904, Bellingham was a small country town. There was no Police Dept., just Town Constables. There was no Fire Dept., just Fire Wardens. They fought fires with brooms/shovels/and water buckets. There was no electricity in town, but phone service was provided in South Bellingham by Providence Telephone & Telegraph Company. Bellingham's population was approximately 1500 with only 400 registered voters.. The Public Library was located in a private home (now owned by the Eldredge family). Some people worked in factories along the Charles River, but virtually everyone lived and worked on a farm.

Two major organizations in town were The Society for Detecting Horse Thieves and The Bellingham Grange.

All roads were dirt roads, with the exception of South Main Street (towards the Center) for approximately 1500 feet. This section was made of crushed stone.

Nationally, the President was Teddy Roosevelt. He had ascended to this position after the assassination of President McKinley... The Wright Brothers had just flown their 1st airplane the summer before and the citizens of Bellingham were quite angry with the M.A. & W. Street Railway Co. for increasing the trolley rates to a nickel. The Selectmen were censured for neglect-of-duty over that affair.... This last brou-ha-ha led to the cause for a public meeting in the Town Hall, a tradition that lasts today.

2004 is the 100th anniversary of the fountain--we hope it will be here 100 years from now!!!!

The rededication was promoted by the Historical Commission and assisted by members of the Town Common Trustees. The Trustees agreed that the fountain makes a wonderful addition to the Common, both in beauty and history.

A quote from a member of the Historical Commission--"we have to realize what this town was like before we were here." "We should be very proud of something that has survived for 100 years."

Tote Bags donated by
Triple Play Sports ETA

DONATIONS

Marguerite Snell

in memory of

Clarence Snell

Phyllis B. Rutan

John Cubellis

Claire Johns

in memory of

Bertrand Remillard

Dolores Martel

Janet Roach

Ethel Berardi

in memory of

All Veterans

Betsy Barbutes

June Merrick

Constance C. Sawyer

Terse Verse
The Pioneers would have shed big tears
And thrown away their axes,
If in a dream, they'd caught a gleam
Of what we pay in taxes....

MEMORIES of the OLD BAPTIST PARSONAGE

In 1961, I was asked to write about the BAPTIST PARSONAGE--a daunting task. What could I say about a poorly-constructed building??

A few days ago, I heard the voice of the old parsonage pleading-- "Don't let the young whipper-snapper of a new parsonage take the glory that has been mine for 110 years." "Tell them about me!"

Mr. Massey, a beloved southern gentleman from Virginia was pastor when on February 1836, it was voted "to sell the church wood-lot, if we can, and the proceeds to go towards erecting a parsonage-house." The wood-lot sold for \$300., and after expenses, \$296.42 was paid to Jarvis Cook towards the building of a parsonage for the 1st Baptist Church & Society in Bellingham. Mr. Massey was married in the summer and with a new bride was the first to live in the parsonage...The Center School was named in his honor.

Following in Rev. Massey's footsteps were Rev. Alfred Murray, Rev. Emma Park, Rev. Daniel Wade, Rev. William Wakefield and Rev. Clarence Chamberlain (to name a few).

The parsonage was poorly constructed. It's rafters, too far apart so that the roof sagged under the weight of heavy snow. Sometimes, it leaked. Chill winds blew through the frail walls. The Ladies Aid shouldered the expensive burden to keep it in livable condition.

The old parsonage walls often told of the happenings during 110 years of living and a heap of living it was! No other building in town can duplicate it!!

The parsonage told it's own story--the 'sounds' of the old-fashioned bathtub, later to be replaced with a more modern one. The frozen water pipes, I helped to thaw. A troubled sewage system needed two dry-wells dug in the front lawn--with stones donated by Mr. Francis Thayer, I attempted to correct the matter.

From the walls, I "heard" the sounds of morning; the cock crowing, hens fussing with chicks, squirrels running and jumping from tree to tree, the horse whinnying, the cat chasing her kittens. Later, when the pastor came out, I "heard" the milk splashing-in-the-pail, the sound of wood being chopped; the hoeing in the garden--sounds of everyday life----

The parsonage had survived many sounds, many moods--the pastor pacing, as he worked on a sermon--the sounds of mourning--the sounds of a newborn babe--the pastor praying for guidance--choir voices raised in song--the voices beseeching guidance at prayer meetings, etc...

I smelled the fragrance of lilacs in the spring. I heard the phone ringing "pleading for assistance". Also the sounds of little children playing and growing up in it's shelter, needing a drink, some loving care, parental nursing, etc...

I remember the old kerosene lamps turned out and the new electric lights switched on; the crackling of flames from the fireplace in winter.

The parsonage was always BUSY, always engaged in all sorts of situations. Plans were made here for Children's Day, for the 4th of July, for the church picnic. Plans for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Happy New Year and a reverent Easter....

I heard the sound of sleigh bells, as the pastor hitched up 'Old Dobbin' for a sleigh ride. I also heard the sound of 'cranking up the engine' of the 1st automobile, with the pastor at the wheels.

Changes were constantly occurring. Even as one pastor left--the empty walls--then, a new occupant arriving to 'shepherd the flock.'

On Sunday mornings, the peal of the church bell called all to worship. Pastor, womenfolk, children dressed in their best to attend services. In the turmoil and trials of living, here at last was peace.



The old parsonage felt the pulse of the community and reached out into the world whenever possible. The congregation, the newly-weds all shared their joys and concerns for the future in this house.

The parsonage was sold in 1946 for \$3500.

Truly it can said, "Here was a house by the side of the road that was indeed a friend to man."

The "voice" of the old parsonage has stilled and I feel that it is content that I have told at least once, the glory of it's past, the sounds of the past that have echoed within its humble walls and

the love that it has kindled in man and beast.

The essence of this article was written by John Lundvall and was presented to the church as requested...Rewritten and reworded for this publication by ETA....

A YEAR IN NEW ENGLAND

January Is

Cold dark mornings
Icicles hanging from roofs
Etched frost on window panes
The crunch of snow under foot
The creaking of the house on cold nights
Skating and the crisp blue of the sky
The beauty of the moon on the snow
A star studded night sky
The scrape of the snow shovel on the driveway
The sluggish start of the car's motor

February Is

The biggest blizzard of the winter
Valentines Day
No school announcements on radio and T.V.
A row of wet boots in the kitchen
Wet mittens drying on the heater
The squeal of children sliding
Mid-winter vacation
Seed catalogs and garden dreams
Longer days and melting snow
The first crocus blossom on the south side of the house

March Is

Ice storms
Mud - everywhere
Pot holes consuming cars
Bottomless puddles
Wind blowing everything that's not tied down
Spring house cleaning
Spring bulbs starting to poke through the earth
Pussy willows
Milder weather and town elections
Spring and the first robins

April Is

Showers
A rosy hue in the meadow
Forsythia, dandelions, cowslips, bluetts and violets in bloom
The smell of warm, damp earth
The return of the summer birds
The shock of a spring snow storm
The temperature reaching 80° a week after the snow
Spring clothes and Easter vacation
Income tax time
Grass turning green

From the pen of Guest Editor
Florence McCracken

Founding of the First Baptist Church

Prior to 1736, Bellingham Baptists journeyed to Boston or Swansea (spelled Swansey at the time) for services. Many made near weekly pilgrimages to Swansea for all day meetings. Traveling by horseback and wagon over 30 miles of dirt roads, the worshippers must have spent a full day of the week traveling and attending services.

By 1736 seven Bellingham residents had been baptized

Swansey January 13 1736

October 6. 1737 At a Church meeting of the old Church in Swansey the desire of the Brethren dwelling in Bellingham to form themselves into a Church state was communicated to the Church by their Elder which motion of theirs was approved of.
witness my hand
Samuel Maxwell

in Swansea.

"This is to Certifie that the following parsons were Baptized upon profession of their faith viz: William Hayward, Nicholas Cook, John Thomson, Eleazer Hayward, Samuئل Hayward, Ebenezer Hayward, Joseph Partridge, all inhabitation of Bellingham.

*Attested by me Samuel Maxwell, Minister
 Swansey January 13, 1736*

The long journey and the desire for their own church led on October 6, 1737 to a petition for their own "October 6, 1737 At a Church meeting of the old Church in Swansey the desire of the Brethren Dwelling in Bellingham to form themselves into a church state was communicated to the church by their Elder which motion of theirs was approved of.

*Witness my hand
 Samuel Maxwell"*

On November 23, 1737, fifteen men met in Mendon and signed the first church covenant. This first church document is a remarkable profession of faith. It provides a view of the early Baptist thinking in Bellingham.

The signers were:

Nicholas Cook	Edward Pickering
Ebenezer Hayward	
John Thomson	Joseph Partridge
Eliphelet Holbrook	Samuel Hayward
Benjamin Force	Elezer Hayward
Elezer Taft	Peter Thomson
Samuel Thomson	Elnathan Wight
Jonathan Thomson	Joseph Wight

Of the fifteen men who signed the 1737 covenant, five had also signed the petition for incorporation of the Town of Bellingham in 1719. (Nicholas Cook, Samuel Hayward, Eliphelet Holbrook, John Thomson, and Samuel Thomson).

The records of the First Baptist Church in Bellingham go back to its very beginning. Although sparse at times, the recording of events began with a book called "Bellingham in the year 1737, Baptist Church Book to Keep Church Records". Handwritten, it provides a history of the church through its formation and growth. Subsequent books continue this record showing the church in its high times and low ebb. The ability of the church to survive often seems to be its greatest strength.

The first recorded business meeting of the Church was on February 23, 1738 at the Bellingham home of John Thompson. The latter was elected the first church moderator. Eliphelet Holbrook was chosen "Book keeper to Enter Church Notes" and Nicholas Cook was voted the first Church deacon.

Brother Holbrook was not an avid note taker. The next entry in the "Church Book" was in 1742.

The Bellingham church was the fourth to be formed in Massachusetts after the First in Boston, First in Swansea and one in South Brimfield. By 1740 there were four more (Rehoboth, Sutton, Leicester and West Springfield).

The Church met at the homes of its members in the beginning. The religious meetings were likely presided over either by the Deacon or by Joseph Wight, its elected head. At times ministers from other parishes visited. Visits by outside ministers were the only opportunities for formal worship and Baptisms. Several of the baptized were female, the first mention of women in the church books.

Women were not participants in the governing of the Church anymore than they participated in the town or colonial government. The Church was far ahead of the secular areas in recognizing women and providing them a role, but it was still many years in the future.

During the 1740's, neither the town parish nor the Baptist Church had a minister. Neither was large enough or wealthy enough to support their own. Members of both churches may have looked to each other for support. The desire for spiritual guidance was stronger than any differences in their religious beliefs. A letter was sent by the Baptists in 1743 suggesting sharing a minister. It was friendly and compromising but unanswered.

Religious debate was not a problem in Bellingham. The Baptists were willing to set aside their own differences in order to obtain a minister within the Town. This overture was not accepted. Neither town nor church records indicate the reaction to this proposal.

YOU ARE OVER THE HILL IF YOU REMEMBER

Continued

Spats
Curtain stretchers
Clothes lines in every back yard
Having to crank a car to start it
The wood shed
All bathing suits were one piece
Maggie & Jigs funnies
Buttoned shoes
Ink wells
Dipping pens in ink wells
Oiled floors in class rooms
Large size bills (money)
Little Henry funnies
Paper dolls
Whist parties
Horlicks malted milk
Musteroie
Carter's Little Liver Pills
Gabriel Header
Walter Winchel
Lum & Abner
When you had a 24 inch waist
Penny loafers
Churning butter
Rug beaters
When you wound the clock and put the cat out
Old time alarm clocks
The chamber pot
You wore long johns every winter
Out door privy
The 3¢ stamp
When you worked for 40¢ an hour
When a pay raise was 5¢
Don Ami cake to wash windows
Boys got their first pair of long pants
Your first date
Men's stiff straw hats
Your First pink license
When there were no ticks
Muffled him of the mills running
The shoddy trucks that always leaned to the
right
When men whittled
Home made whistles
Sad irons heated on the stove
Sprinkling clothes to be ironed
Saturday night baths in the big copper tub
Hay cut with a scythe
The pot bellied living room stove
The 5 & 10¢ stores
Trains going through town
Old time push reel lawn mowers
Farm work horses
Marcels

F.M.M.

We enjoy our reader's letters - keep them coming! One in particular I would like to comment on.

I graduated with William Folev in 1943. We are both natives of Bellingham. I remember his folks well. Back when we were a "hick town" as some folks called us, it was a great small town to grow up in. It had three distinct sections, north, center and south. I went to school in both the center and north so got to know folks in both sections. When we started high school in the south, we made new friends. Our graduating class had only 32 pupils whom we all knew well. I keep in touch with a few of the remaining 18.

The most mischief kids got into then was smoking corn silk or stealing apples. There were no juvenile delinquents. Chief Fleurette always said there were no bad kids. We had a happy, family oriented, fun filled childhood. We didn't realize how blessed we were.

Back when autograph books were the rage, I had William's folks write in mine. I'll never forget the rhyme his dad wrote-

The night was dark
The sky was blue
As down Hartford Avenue
A Chinaman flew
And from his breast
A dagger drew
And plunged it into
An oyster stew.

Writing poetry seemed to run in the family. William's sister, Mary, wrote several which have appeared in past issues of the Comments. Thanks for the memories.

F.M.M.

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DEATHS

Therese C. Milette	Deborah Riley Garrey
Stephen Brady	Roberta DeAcetis
Helen Ryan	Jeannette DuBois
Robert M. Russell	Mario Bianchi
Thelma G. Davidson	Lorraine Peterson
William Cifizzari	Muriel Martel
Thomas J Sullivan	William Perry
Alcide L. Bruneau Jr.	Jacqueline Clerc
Maryann Gallagher	Griffin
John L Chaisson Jr.	Frederick Bardell
Francis C Babbins	John L. Pelland
Sandra L Falwell	Jessica M. Rigoli
Jean D. Laviolette	
Colleen (LaVerne) McKenzie	
Aline Zielinski	
Lawrence Marino, Sr.	
Dorothy Spencer	
Donna (Johnson) Reed	

POST ROADS AND MILE MARKERS

The original post road which ran from New York to Boston was laid out on orders from King Charles II of England who wanted better communications among his colonial governors. There were many other Post Roads that were eventually laid out to connect all the colonies. These main routes and their off shoots were laid out so mail carried by horse back could travel amongst the colonies.

On January 22, 1623, the first post rider left Manhattan for Boston, thus launching a monthly mail service. The ride of about 250 miles through New Haven, Hartford, Springfield, Worcester, and Cambridge took more than two weeks before the rider reached Boston.

Governor Francis Lovelace of New York gave the following instructions to this first rider before he left New York: "You are to comport yourself with all sobriety and civility to those that shall entrust you... You are principally to ally yourself to the Governors, especially Governor Winthrop... You shall do well to provide yourself to a Spare Horse, good Port Mantels soe neither letter nor Paquetts receive any damage under your hand&idots".

This original post road, through mostly wilderness, as most post roads were, was laid out along old Indian trails. This was called the Boston Post Road or the Upper Post Road. Israel Bissell, a young post rider, followed this road as he raced across five colonies to raise the Patriots after the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord. It took him five days and six hours to reach Philadelphia where the Continental Congress was assembled.

This is, also, the route that George Washington followed twice, once when he rode north to take command of the Continental Army and once on his victory tour after having been elected as the nation's first president.

Later, two other post roads, the Middle Post Road and the Lower Post Road were laid out. The Lower Post Road went through Providence joining the Upper in New Haven, and the Middle Post Road went between the Upper and Lower joining the Upper in Hartford.

All three routes started in Boston at the same place (about where Downtown Crossing is now located). In Roxbury, a stone called the "Parting Stone"¹ was set up at a fork in the route. When reaching the "Parting Stone", the riders using the Upper Post Road would go west, and the riders using the Middle and Lower Post Roads would go south..

There was a second "Parting Stone" in Dedham where the riders on the Middle Post Road would go west, and the riders on the Lower Post Road would go south.

Bellingham was one of the towns that the Middle Post Road passed through. After passing through Westwood, Medfield, Millis, and Medway, the Middle Post Road entered Bellingham following along where the present day Hartford Avenue runs, then continued on into Mendon. The exact date for the laying out of this Post Road is not known, so some of these present day towns may not have been established when the route came through.

Benjamin Franklin received an appointment from the British government in 1753 along with William Hunt to serve as Joint Postmasters-General of the colonies. It was their assignment to

oversee the postal system. While in this position, Franklin made several improvements. One of these improvements was the setting of mile markers along the Post Roads.

These mile markers were to allay the suspicions of his Yankee customers who thought they were being cheated on postage which was assessed per mile. The total assessment being the distance that the mail was carried by the post riders along these Post Roads.

In 1753, Franklin started to install these markers, placing one at the end of each mile. There is controversy as to whether or not Franklin himself did actually oversee the installation of these mile markers.² Even so, it was his invention that was used for measuring. He had rigged a carriage with a homemade odometer attached to a wheel. A bell rang at the end of each mile. The carriage would stop, and a stake would be driven into the ground. A crew that followed replaced each stake with a sandstone marker which indicated the distance from Boston, or in some cases the markers indicated the distance to another town. With these markers in place, the exact mileage could be used in determining a customer's assessment for carrying a piece of mail.

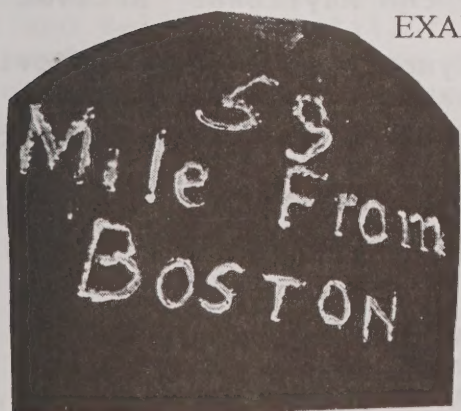
One of these stones was placed in Bellingham when the Middle Post Road was marked. This stone mile marker now stands in front of North School, a few hundred feet from its original location which was on the north side of Hartford Avenue just south of St. Brendan's Church. The stone was moved in order to preserve it. The original marker was replaced with a slate stone. The slate stone was, possibly, from the slate quarry off Maple Street. The face of the stone is engraved as follows: 31 miles from Bofton; R S 1767. The R S stands for Royal Service as the postal service at that time was under the direction of the King of England.

Boston and other communities still have a few milestones. The longest continuous line of these mile markers is along the Boston Post Road, just west of Worcester, between Leicester and Warren, where there are 16 markers.

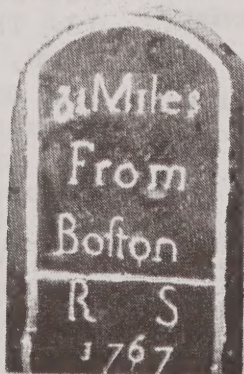
Ironically, in 1774, Franklin was judged by the King to be too sympathetic to the colonies so he was dismissed as joint Postmaster General.

1. This Parting Stone is located in Roxbury at the fork of Roxbury Street and Center Street in John Eliot Square. The front reads: Parting Stone; on the right is engraved Cambridge and Watertown and on the left is engraved Dedham. This engraving told the post riders where the roads would lead them.
2. Franklin's 32 volumes of collected writings there is no mention of the mile markers.

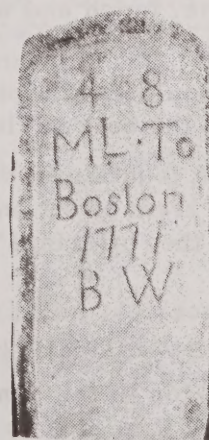
EXAMPLES OF MILE MARKERS



Boston Post Road
Spencer, MA



Hartford Avenue
Bellingham



Upper Road
Sutton, MA

Do you REMEMBER BELLINGHAM when.....

- Church bells rang every Sunday morning ?
- plane-spotting in the Town Hall tower during WWII ?
- Old Home Days, when all oldtime residents would return to renew friendships and to reminisce, enjoy a community supper and program ?
- the school children danced around the May Pole in front of the Center School ?
- the Country Fair held on the Town Comm, or (when there was one) ?
- there was a huge oak tree and hitching rail around it, at Thayer's store ?
- when there was a "Thayer's" store ?
- the kids in town would slide from what is now St. Blaise down through the center of town, all the way to the corner of Taunton street without stopping ? All we needed was a 'look-out' at the water fountain as we crossed over on to Route 140 ...
- the best sliding hill was located where now you have Almacs parking lot ?
- the 'little' kids skated on the FROG POND and the 'big' guys dared to go on the BASIN ?
- you could swim in Box Pond ?
- there was a Depot on Depot Street ?
- we played ball in 'Cow-Flap Stadium' ? (located in what is now Bellingham Plaza.)*
- we could go to the BIG city (Woonsocket) for the day for only \$1.00 ? This included bus fare, a movie, lunch and window shopping.
- the 'big' boys would sneak into the Baptist Church and ring the bell on Halloween ?
- there was a soda fountain in the local Drug Store ? What a treat to sit on a stool and contemplate all the 'offerings' !
- having your groceries, milk, fish, grain, hay, ice, coal, delivered to your door ?
- some 'LUCKY' kids in the center of town were PRIVILEGED to ride in the locomotive of the train as it crossed the trestle off Depot Street ? What a thrill that was to sit in the engineers seat and blow the whistle !

- Minstrel Shows and 1 or 2-Act Plays were the entertainment offered on the Town Hall stage ?
- snow covered the streets in winter and you were often lucky enough to get a ride in a horse-drawn sled or pung ?
- children hung REAL May baskets ?
- on a hot summer day, children sold REAL lemonade to passersby or carried it to men working in the fields ? (Kool-aid was unheard of.)
- you could listen in on your neighbor's conversation on a party-line ? (You just had to be careful of the click.)
- you could tumble into a featherbed in winter, so as not to freeze in those cold bedrooms ? It was like being lost in a dark, warm cloud.

ANSWER TO THE MASSACHUSETTS TRIVIA.

- 1/ Boston Terrier
- 2/ 'Old Ironsides'
- 3/ Boston, Massachusetts 1898
- 4/ Taunton, Massachusetts 1639
- 5/ Great Barrington, Massachusetts 1886
- 6/ Bean Town, The Hub and City on a hill
- 7/ John Adams, Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, John Hancock, James Otis, Robert Paine and Benjamin Franklin
- 8/ Boston Marathon.
- 9/ Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts.
- 10/ Hadley, Massachusetts.
- 11/ Volleyball
- 12/ The first colonist born in Provincetown after the Mayflower arrived in the New World.
- 13/ The Plymouth Monument in Provincetown, Massachusetts.
- 14/ Doug Flutie, a native of Natick, Massachusetts.
- 15/ Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg in Webster.
- 16/ 1620
- 17/ Jail
- 18/ The ladybug
- 19/ The American Elm
- 20/ John Adams, John Quincy Adams, John F. Kennedy and George H.W. Bush.

MAILBOX NEWS

Dear Mr. Taft,

Thank you for the Crimpville Comments! I've saved them and enjoy reading about Bellingham, that came before me. The people, the mills, the town, the politics were livlier a few years ago.

Keep well and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dolores Martel

Crimpville Comments,

I want to thank you again and again for all that you folk do in publishing The Comments. I read every article and so enjoy every word.

Janet(Brown) Roach

Historical Commission,

Needless to say, I am delinquent in not writing you much sooner. Your issue showing my grammar school graduation was such a happy reminder.

The best years for me were in school and Bellingham still tugs me. I wonder how many of the students are still alive and stirring?

Ours was a simple life--No massive programming, no hurry to out-shout each other. Just think of those devoted teachers! They cared about teaching. We did our homework, and we did learn. It is all history.

Lenore Colletto

Crimpville Comments,

Please accept my small donation, for postage, etc.

I enjoy reading about Bellingham as I lived there, the first 20 years of my life, but have not been in town for several years. I still remember some of the names.

We are all getting older and things change.

Sincerely,

Phyllis(Brown)Rutan

Dear Commission:

Here is my donation for the CRIMPVILLE COMMENTS. I enjoy receiving each copy.

Constance Crooks Sawyer

With the 'passing' of Dorothy Spencer--we feel it appropriate to make a few comments.

Dorothy was a life-long resident of Bellingham Center, where she lived with her mother, Ethel, until moving to Florida.

She kept in constant touch with her letters, contributions, and remembrances.

We will miss hearing from her

Historical Commission

"WRINKLES ARE THE DIMPLES OF 'OLD' AGE"

**Bellingham Historical Commission
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Bellingham, MA 02019**

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Before And.....



AND YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD A BAD DAY!!